

## BUSINESS &amp; LABOR

EXHIBIT NO. 9  
DATE 3-24-09  
BILL NO. HB 572

JP Pomnichowski

**From:** Stephen Vaile [stephenvaile@3rivers.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 23, 2009 9:31 PM  
**To:** pomnicho@montanadsl.net  
**Cc:** blacks@3rivers.net  
**Subject:** HB572

J.P.

Thank you for your call.

As we discussed I am writing this to state my support for HB572.

I am a small business owner located in Shelby. My business, "Rising Wolf Enterprises", a sole proprietorship, functions in the computing subset of the technology sector of the global economy. The present focus of "Rising Wolf Enterprises" is threefold:

1. Computer and technology solutions research
2. Service Solutions
3. Maintenance and break-fix.

The SBIR and STTR programs are essential to the harnessing of the technological and economic power that Montana small business provides to the economic engine of our state and the nation.

I support this proposed legislation not because it is a handout or bailout, but because it can provide a mechanism and entity that will give focus and direction to the technological research efforts of firms like mine. The prospect of "bridge funding" for Phase I to Phase II potentially commercializable projects is a necessary incentive for Montana small businesses. This incentive helps us to continue important work that will create jobs in and for Montanans.

When enacted, this legislation will "level the playing field" for Montana small businesses that are competing with businesses around the globe. It is a fact that countries outside the United States and other U.S. states incentivize their domestic small businesses with many sorts of funding mechanisms and tax considerations. This creates a disparity in resources for Montana small businesses and we have to spend an inordinate amount of time raising funding.

I am not asking for charity, I am asking for legislation that will provide the mechanism for "bridge funding" assistance and thereby the opportunity for commercializable research projects to create jobs in and for Montanans

Thank You for your service to our state,  
Stephen Vaile  
Rising Wolf Enterprises  
(406) 450-8544

3/24/2009



March 20, 2009.

The Honorable Senator Joe Balyeat, Chairman  
The Honorable Senator Verdel Jackson, Vice Chairman  
Senate Business, Labor and Economic Affairs  
Montana Senate  
PO Box 200500  
Helena, MT 59620-0500

CC: The Honorable Senator Gregory Barkus  
The Honorable Senator Roy Brown  
The Honorable Senator Jim Keane  
The Honorable Senator Jim Peterson  
The Honorable Senator Carolyn Squires  
The Honorable Senator Donald Steinbeisser  
The Honorable Senator Sharon Stewart-Peregoy  
The Honorable Senator Joe Tropila  
The Honorable Senator Jonathon Windy Boy

Dear Mr. Chairman Balyeat and Vice-Chairman Jackson:

AdvR is high-technology company developing new laser application for biomedical, communications and a host of innovative technologies home grown right here in Bozeman. We employ Montana State University graduates and sell our products to university researchers, companies and government agencies throughout the US and the World. We depend upon government funding for early-stage research and development of our technology. Without this funding, we would not be a small business in Montana. This federal technology funding provides the support necessary to bring our products to market. Unfortunately, SBIR federal funding limits us in how we use this funding to achieve commercial success.

I am writing in support of HB 572, legislation that would create a state fund to match federal SBIR/STTR grants to small businesses. State support would directly help us to reach out to those who can help bring our technology to market. In the ten years we have been in existence, we have attracted about \$10M in development funds. A significant portion of this funding, and commercial sales are the direct result of the federal SBIR program. We are part of an expanding Montana technology sector with steady growing commercial sales and more good-paying jobs.

AdvR has successfully used SBIR/STTR funds to develop and commercialize new lasers for a broad range of applications. However, federal funds often fall short of what is needed to get to market. Matching funds from the state could be used to cover costs incurred establishing our technologies in the marketplace. These funds could also be used

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as a bridge to Phase II funding during the funding hiatus that often occurs between Phase I and Phase II funding.

Like so many small businesses in Montana, we struggle and bootstrap to move our technology forward. Montana companies are highly successful in winning SBIR grants, but less so in turning these technologies into commercial products. The funding provided through this program will help a broad set of Montana industries in agriculture, energy, defense, photonics, engineering, software development, and biomedical bring their products to the market. This assistance could play a critical role in bringing additional clean high technology jobs to Montana.

Thank you for considering this legislation. I would appreciate it, if this letter was made part of the official testimony for the hearing to consider this legislation. Best regards.

Sincerely,

Ron Cooper  
Director Program Development